
SYNTHESIS

Evolving a Strategy for Providing Atmospheric Information

Moderator: *Dr. Elbert W. (Joe) Friday, Jr., Director, Board on Atmospheric Sciences and Climate, National Research Council*

Dr. Paul Try, Senior Vice President, Science and Technology Corporation

Rapporteurs: *Mr. Floyd Hauth, Office of the Federal Coordinator for Meteorology (Science and Technology Corporation)*

Mr. James McNitt, Office of the Federal Coordinator for Meteorology (Science and Technology Corporation)

Synopsis

Dr. Try opened with a slide and remarks reflecting the need for a two-tracked approach for the strategy. One is to strive for longer-term goals that are aligned with the 21st Century report vision and two is to begin actions in the short-term to make progress toward those goals.

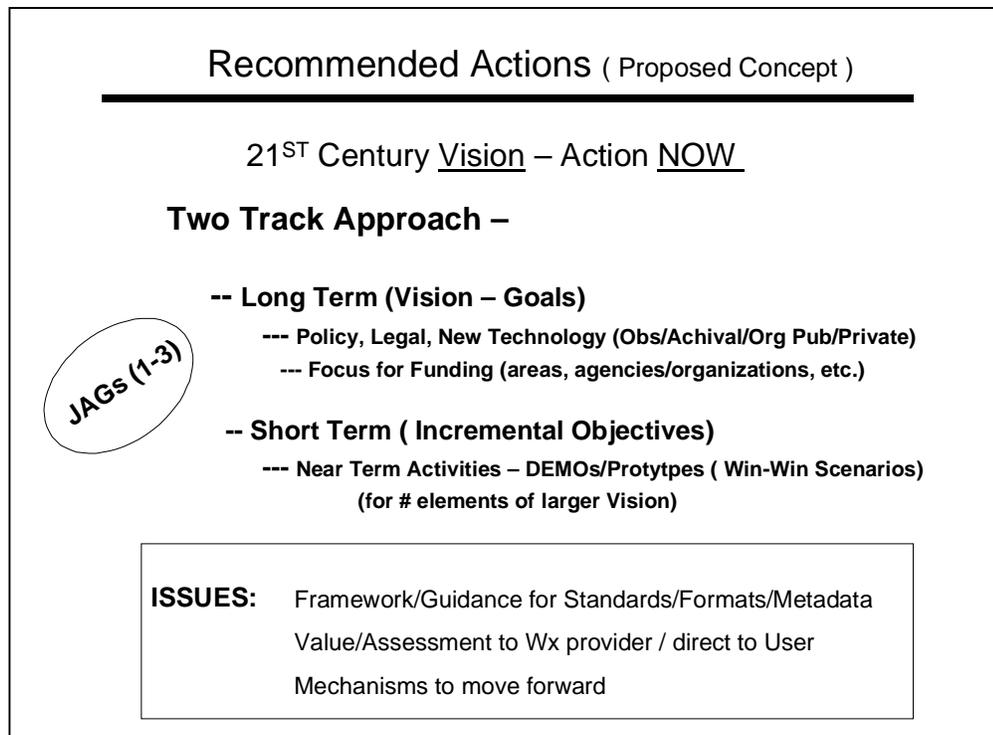


Figure 1. Next Steps

The long-term actions deal with the vision and goals and include considerations such as policy, legal, new technology, and private/public partnering issues and initiatives.

The short-term actions include demonstrations and prototypes for a number of milestones that achieve incremental objectives.

Dr. Try identified the following issues:

- Developing framework and guidance for standards and formats, including metadata.
- Conducting value assessments of information provided to users and giving feedback to providers.
- Establishing a mechanism to move forward on the strategy.

Dr. Friday commented on the remarkable synergism of the information presented on the first morning of the workshop. The presentations verified that the vision presented in the 21st Century report was reasonable and that the recommendations from that report along with those from more recent NRC reports were lining up to emphasize the need for improving client services. Dr. Friday stated that the timing is right for developing a strategy because of the increasing needs of an expanding user community. The Air Force and Navy presentations reinforced the perception that the opportunity is now to do something that is important and that has been needed for a long time, to plan for better collection and distribution of atmospheric and environmental information in the future. Atmospheric science is becoming more useful, and observation and forecasting capabilities are improving. As the results of our community's efforts become more useful, demand for products and services will increase and industry will lobby for our services.

How to proceed? Joint action groups and other groups (or through contracts) should take the following actions to achieve the vision of improved services:

1. Review and inventory the quantity and quality of observing sites. Include:
 - Regional Climate Centers (good knowledge and links with state climatologists).
 - State and local governments (many useful sites such as water resources, emergency management, agricultural weather).
 - Private networks such as TV and weather amateurs.
 - University/research networks.
2. Determine how to improve coverage of and access to observing sites. Add sites where there are gaps in coverage, eliminate redundancies where prudent, and assign responsibility for quality control/assurance.
3. Determine how to tie sites together to form a national network to meet national needs. This process will require contacts with various communities to find, document and validate user requirements for data and information. A methodology will be needed to assign priorities on user requirements.

4. Determine a mechanism to deliver information to user communities in useable forms. Delivery processes must accommodate low-end technology users.
5. Articulate partnerships.
6. Focus on the users' requirements.

Questions, Comments, and Discussion

Question from the floor: What about including the international community in the inventories and reviews?

Response: Meteorology knows no political boundaries, however, we need to get our own house in order first, especially to serve the mesoscale applications of users.

Comment from the floor: There are some technologies and networks in foreign areas that can provide useful information for our reviews and inventories. An example is the road sensors in Europe.

Comment from the floor: This workshop did a good job of representing federal agencies but there were few from university communities.

Response: We will rely on Linda Miller, UCAR, and others to carry the message to those communities.

Question from the floor: In the early 1970's the Air Force was questioning the value of Air Weather Service. The AWS Commander, Bill Best, established a value analysis process to show the economic benefit of AWS services across the spectrum of military missions and operations. This activity proved successful. Is there a need for such an organized approach now?

Response: Observing System Simulation Experiments (OSSE's) are one of the activities to show the value of observations. There are also efforts in progress with insurance companies and water resource managers to determine the value of atmospheric/ environmental information. However there is no one agency or organization in charge of such evaluations. This type of activity, however, is recommended in the 21st Century report.

Question from the floor: Will there be a meeting of stakeholders to take some of the actions recommended in this workshop?

Response: The Federal Coordinator will respond to this question in his wrap-up session.

Question from the floor: The 21st Century report included recommendations on leadership activities for the OFCM and others, the need for free and open exchange of

atmospheric information, and the need for the atmospheric communities to cooperate and coordinate to determine benefits of their products and services. Will all these be addressed?

Response: The federal agencies have articulated their needs and capabilities for atmospheric information. The money and resources affected will drive cooperation and coordination of other communities as time goes on.